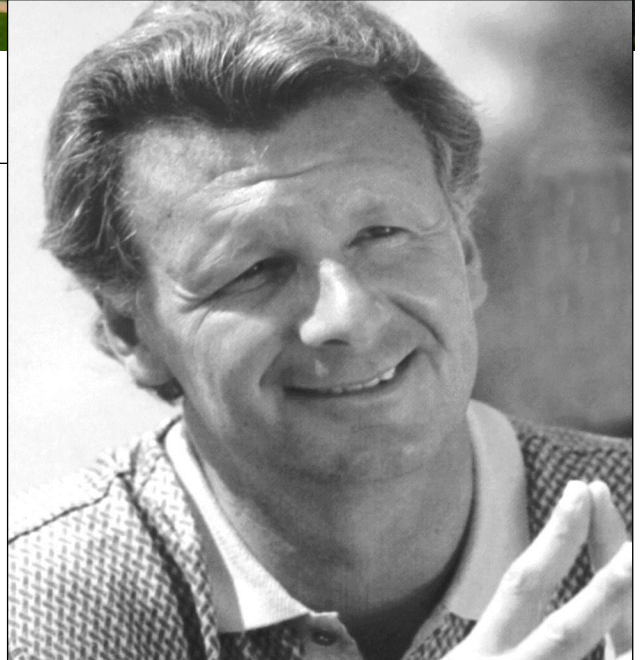


**Current Events in the  
Michigan Senate**

**July 2011**

# Lansing Update



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## New 4-Year Welfare Cap to Hit Michigan

This month, the Senate approved legislation capping lifetime welfare benefits at 48 months putting Michigan in line with other states. Michigan was one of only two states that allowed for lifetime welfare benefits.

The 4-year cap on welfare benefits provides sufficient time for people to look for employment elsewhere before their state aid ends. Michigan can no longer be responsible for supporting generation after generation of welfare recipients.

Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa all have five year limits while Indiana has a 2 year limit. Michigan is now inline with its neighbors when it comes to social welfare.

## Senate Bill Extends Foreclosure Prevention Program

Senate legislation now signed into law will extend a program that helps homeowners get mortgages back on track.

The 90-day foreclosure prevention program encourages homeowners and lenders to work things out and avoid an unnecessary foreclosure.

Under the program, mortgage lenders are required to mail written notice of a potential foreclosure to homeowners. The homeowner could then request a meeting with their lender, which would result in a 90-day period for mortgage negotiations to take place, if applicable in the situation.

Borrowers who do not take the steps required under the program or who do not qualify for a modification would still be subject to foreclosure proceedings.

Public Act 72 of 2011 extends the program until Jan. 5, 2012.

## Assistance is just a phone call away



Can't find what you're looking for at [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov)?

Call 1-877-932-6424, toll-free, to "Ask Michigan."

An agent is available 24/7 to help with information related to state of Michigan questions and referrals to county, city, township or federal sites as well.

# Changes for Tax-foreclosed Homeowners

The Michigan Attorney General recently stated that Municipalities are no longer allowed to demand that homeowners who purchase a tax-foreclosed home pay the previous bills before their own utilities may be connected. Once a home is foreclosed, all liens are cancelled.

The purpose of this provision is to restore foreclosed property back to productive use as quickly as possible.

When purchasing a tax-foreclosed home, buyers are recommended to demand their utilities be connected immediately.

## Remember to Plan Ahead

With “orange barrel season” in full swing, why not consult the 2011 state highway construction map before you hit the road? The free guide, called “Paving the Way,” alerts drivers to major state road and bridge projects.



Motorists can request a map by calling MDOT in Lansing at 517-373-2160 or sending an e-mail to [mdotwebinfo@michigan.gov](mailto:mdotwebinfo@michigan.gov) with your name and address.

In addition, you can check an updated list of lane closures on state trunk lines at [www.michigan.gov/drive](http://www.michigan.gov/drive). The site features current and planned construction projects throughout the states as well as images from traffic cameras in Detroit, Grand Rapids and the Upper Peninsula.

## College Scholarship Available For ‘Fixing’ Michigan

College students with ideas on how to help improve Michigan’s infrastructure should apply for a scholarship through the Students Reinventing Michigan Corporation.

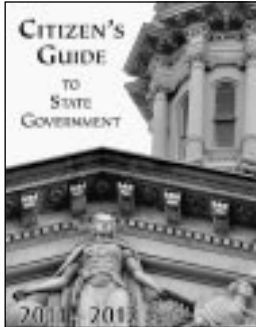
The competition is open to all undergraduate students attending Michigan colleges, universities, or community colleges. The competition is open until Nov. 15, when proposals are due. Students must register and submit their proposals online at:

[www.studentsreinventingmichigan.com](http://www.studentsreinventingmichigan.com). The awards will be announced on Jan. 15. Winners of the competition will receive cash prizes.

For more information about the competition, visit: [www.studentsreinventingmichigan.com](http://www.studentsreinventingmichigan.com).

# This Month's Highlighted Publications

Please contact my office for a hard copy or go to my website for an electronic copy  
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senators/Brandenburg.asp?District=11>

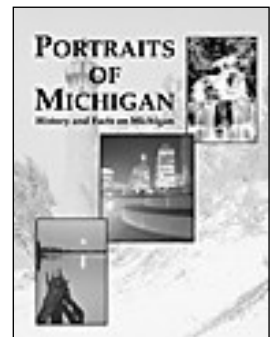


## A Citizen's Guide to State Government

It is important in a democracy that citizens help keep their legislators informed. As a citizen, you can help insure good legislation on state and national levels by communicating with your elected representatives at the proper time.

## Portraits of Michigan: Portraits and Facts

Miscellaneous Michigania is presented in an interesting and educational manner, with pictures and artwork, to inform about our state's agricultural products, natural resources, social culture, and early history. Topics presented include famous Michiganians, a timeline, and derivations of county names. The booklet is complete with maps, quizzes, and multiple-choice tests.



## For The People...By The People...How State and Local Governments Operate

To help citizens understand the organization of state and local government, this booklet gives brief descriptions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government, and describes the functions of county, city, township, and village entities of local government.

## Senator Jack Brandenburg's "2011 Boating and Fishing Update"

Before you and your family head to the shore, I wanted to send along some information of interest to boaters and anglers. Along with a legislative report, this newsletter provides safety tips and a resource guide. I hope you find it useful.





## In the News...

### Sen. Brandenburg supports balanced budget amendment

*Lawmaker urges Congress, president to rein in spending*

**LANSING** — To help control government spending, state Sen. Jack Brandenburg supports instituting a federal balanced budget amendment to require Congress to limit spending to no more than projected revenues.

“Here in Michigan we are constitutionally required to balance our budget on an annual basis, unlike the federal government,” said Brandenburg, R-Harrison Township. “National government spending is out of control and must be reined in. I urge Michigan voters to voice their support for this much needed reform now.”

Article 4 Section 31 of the Michigan Constitution states: “One of the general appropriation bills as passed by the Legislature shall contain an itemized statement of estimated revenue by major source in each operating fund for the ensuing fiscal period, the total of which shall not be less than the total of all appropriations made from each fund in the general appropriation bills as passed.”

According to Brandenburg, this means that proposed spending cannot exceed projected revenues.

With the exception of Vermont, every state in the union has some form of balanced budget requirement. Some states have a constitutional requirement, like Michigan, while others are required by statute or judicial interpretation and court rulings.

Enacting a federal balanced budget requirement would require a two-thirds majority vote in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, as well as ratification by at least 38 states.

#### **Remember to Catch Senator Brandenburg on Lansing Update With Phil Nye on Your Cable Provider's Public Access Channel**

This monthly television program airs on public access channels within the entire district. Phil Nye and Senator Brandenburg discuss the hot topics in Lansing. Times of programming vary.

Comcast channels 5 or 12

Wow Channel 10

AT&T Channel 99

### QUESTIONS?

Please feel free to contact my office anytime to voice opinions, concerns, or ask questions. My staff will be more than happy to discuss any issues you have.

Ken Matiyow– Chief of Staff

Dan Papineau– Legislative Director